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SUBJECT: JORDAN SEEKS US SUPPORT IN ADVANCE OF OIC SUMMIT

REF: AMMAN 4991

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) King Abdullah II and Jordanian Foreign Minister Abdulillah Al Khatib separately briefed Ambassador December 1 on GOJ efforts to prepare for the December 7-8 summit in Mecca of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Khatib explained that the GOJ is working for a final communique from the meeting that incorporates the conclusions of the July 2005 Islamic conference in Amman (reftel) in three points:

--a robust condemnation of takfir as practiced by revolutionary salafists;

--an agreement that each of the principal schools of Islamic jurisprudence will limit to the senior-most levels of its institutions the authority to issue fatwas, and that only fatwas vetted at those levels will be deemed legitimate, and;

--a strong endorsement of mutual recognition among the principal schools of jurisprudence.

2. (C) The Jordanians identified Egyptians, Palestinians, Turks and Emiratis as supporters of this agenda. They expressed worry, however, about the Saudis (especially on the takfir clause) and the Qataris.

3. (C) Recognizing that U.S. leverage on internal Islamic religious issues like these is limited and would need to be exercised with discretion, the King and FM nevertheless asked that the USG seek opportunities to persuade the Saudis and Qataris to support, or at least not actively oppose, inclusion of these three elements in the communique, and that efforts with governments would be especially helpful.

4. (C) Comment: King Abdullah has devoted considerable effort throughout the Islamic world over the past year to a campaign to promote the &Amman Message of November, 2004, on moderate Islam. But those efforts have not gone unchallenged by others, perhaps for less-than-substantive reasons in some cases. The King's coordinator for this agenda, his cousin Prince Ghazi, told us this week during APHSC Townsend's visit that the &Amman label of the Amman Message &is meeting resistance in some OIC quarters more than the &Message itself. The King, however, noted that it is no surprise that the two Wahabi nations are trying to water down OIC endorsement of the key points of the Amman Message.

HALE